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Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SY-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 /069 W
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O P 251215Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9985
INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 5473

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, CB
SUBJECT: MARCH 25, THE 84TH DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE

REF: PHNOM PENH 5377

1. SUMMARY: THE KC TOOK THREE POSITIONS NORTHEAST OF NEAK LUONG THREATENING TO CUT NEAK LUONG AND BANAM APART. FANK'S 1ST BRIGADE RETREATED FROM TUOL LEAPMLBRTHWEST OF THE AIRPORT AFTER AB RIEF FIGHT. FIFTEEN ROCKETS LANDED IN POCHENTONG IN THE PAST 24 HOURS WITH NO REPORTED EFFECT AND ANOTHER 30 HIT IN PHNOM PENH WOUNDING THREE PEOPLE ACCORDING TO PRELIMINARY REPORTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE KC HIT FANK'S 1ST BRIGADE, WHICH HAS BEEN HOLDING TUOL LEAP SINCE GOVERNMENT FORCES RETOOK IT MARCH 15, AND FORCED THE BRIGADE TO RETREAT AFTER A THIRTY MINUTE FIREFIGHT. THE 1ST FELL BACK MORE THAN A KILOMETER. HALF A DOZEN KILOMETERS EAST OF TUOL LEAP FANK FORCES TRYING TO CLEAR OUT THE ROCKET BELT REACHED AN INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVE BUT THEN WITHDREW TO SEP UP NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITIONS PRESUMABLY ON MORE DEFENSIBLE TERRAIN. COMMENT: THE WITH-
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DRAWAL FROM TUOL LEAP PUTS FANK ON THE DEFENSIVE NORTH-

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WEST OF THE AIRFIELD AGAIN AND HIGHLIGHTS GOVERNMENT FAILURE TO EXPLOIT ITS INITIAL SUCCESS AT TUOL LEAP. FANK LOST THE INITIATIVE BECAUSE OF POOR COMMAND DISCIPLINE EXACERBATED BY THE MARSHAL'S PERMISSION FOR KOMPONG SPEU COMMANDER CHANTARANGSEY TO PULL HIS ELEMENTS OUT OF THE MAIN TUOL LEAP FORCE AND ATTACK TO REOPEN ROUTE 4. THE REMAINING ELEMENTS WERE APPARENTLY TOOK WEAK TO FEND OFF ANY DETERMINED KC THRUST AGAINST THE TOWN. HOWEVER, RE-INFORCEMENTS HAVE COME FROM KOMPONG SPEU AND A NEW ATTACK TO STABILIZE THE TUOL LEAP FRONT IS DUE TO BE LAUNCHED EARLY TOMORROW.

3. SOUTH OF PHNOM PENH SECOND DIVISION ELEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK OF THE BASSAC RIVER HAVE PULLED BACK EVEN FURTHER FROM THE WAT SETBO POSITION WHICH THE KC SEIZED OVER THE WEEKEND. WEST OF THE CAPITAL, PRELIMINARY REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE KC HAVE TAKEN THE KOMPONG TRAM SUGAR FACTORY AND THE PROVINCIAL ROUTE WHICH LEADS FROM KOMPONG TRAM TO ANG SNOUL ON ROUTE 4. COMMENT: THE WELL-ARMED SUGAR FACTORY WORKER SELF-DEFENSE FORCES FOUGHT GALLANTLY IN 1974, RE-PELLING A DETERMINED KC EFFORT TO SEIZE AND DESTROY THEIR FACTORY. IF TRUE, THE LOSS OF THE FACTORY AND ITS DE-FENDERS WOULD BE A SHARP PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW.

4. THE KC KILLED 13 DEFENDERS AND WOUNDED ANOTHER 37 AS THEY CAPTURED THREE POSITIONS NORTHEAST OF NEAK LUONG. THEY THREATEN TO CUT BANAM FROM NEAK LUONG BUT AT LATEST REPORT ROUTE 15 BETWEEN THE TWO TOWNS IS STILL OPEN.

5. POCHENTONG ONLY TOOK 15 ROCKETS, SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN YESTERDAY, WITH NO REPORTED EFFECT. PHNOM PENH HOWEVER, REPORTS 30 ROUNDS OF WHICH 23 HAVE HIT IN DAY-LIGHT HOURS TODAY. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION IS THAT THE ROUNDS HAVE INJURED ONLY 3 PEOPLE.

6. A LATE REPORT IS THAT TWO BATTALIONS OF THE 83RD BRIGADE HOLDING A SECTOR ALONG THE EAST BANK OF THE ME-KONG OPPOSITE THE CHROUY CHANG WAR NAVAL BASE HAVE SIMPLY ABANDONED THEIR POSITION AND RETURNED TO PHNOM PENH BY SAMPANS.
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